



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department of Philosophy

**PHIL 667 Lec 01**  
**Topics in the Philosophy of Science**  
Fall 2021

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Instructor Name:** Marc Ereshefsky

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday 3:00- 4:00 pm & by appointment. Office hours are conducted via Zoom. The Zoom link for office hours is located in the Class Zoom Information document in the Content folder of D2L.

**COURSE DELIVERY INFORMATION**

Thursdays 4 – 6:45 pm. In person in SS1253.

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Philosophers tend to think that the acceptance or rejection of scientific hypotheses should be based solely on empirical adequacy and such virtues as simplicity and generality. Scientific hypotheses should not be accepted or rejected on the basis of social or ethical values. This approach to science is called the 'Value Free Ideal.' In the last 30 years, many philosophers have challenged the Value Free Ideal and have argued that values do and should affect a scientist's acceptance or rejection of hypotheses. We begin the course by looking at arguments for and against the Value Free Ideal. Then we turn to the question, if non-epistemic values (that is, ethical and political values) should affect the selection of scientific hypotheses, which non-epistemic values should affect the selection of theories? We might think that scientists' racist views should not cause scientists to choose racist theories. On the other hand we might think that feminist views should cause scientists to reject androcentric theories. Determining when moral and social values should affect the acceptance or rejection of a hypothesis, as we will see, is a pressing and controversial issue.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Deep knowledge of a central area of philosophical inquiry –philosophy of science.
- Ability to identify and articulate questions for discussion and investigation.
- Ability to critically digest, interpret, and analyze complex sources.
- Ability to write a convincing argument that takes adequate account of alternative positions.
- Ability to engage in constructive, respectful, oral, and written argumentation.
- Ability to use feedback about one's work to improve one's arguments and writings.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

The course readings will be contemporary articles from professional philosophy journals. A reading list with bibliographic details are posted in the Content folder on D2L.

**COURSE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Written Preparations for Readings

In weeks 2 thru 12 (Sept 16 – Dec 9) of the seminar we will discuss assigned readings. A reading list with bibliographic details are posted under the Content section of this course's D2L site.

To enhance our discussion, a written preparation will be due two hours prior to a seminar meeting (2 pm), and should be placed in the appropriate dropbox on D2L.

Your written preparation will develop a question for that week's reading and will provide a basis for class discussion. Your written preparation should have the following three parts.

- (1) A single sentence statement of your question (this should be a question that ends with a question mark).
- (2) An exposition of your question and background to your question that: identifies the pages, passages, or arguments in the reading where your question arises; explains the context of the reading in which your question arises; and, provides some ideas concerning how one might answer that question.
- (3) An explanation concerning why you think this question is worth discussing.

Please organize your written preparation into three parts labeled as follows:

- (1) Question
- (2) Exposition
- (3) Significance

Your written preparation should be between 200 – 300 words in length.

The question of your written preparation may be remedial; for example, it might ask for a clarification of an important claim, concept, or argument in the reading. Or your question could be more critical in nature, alluding to a weakness in the reading. Or your question could be probing, identifying an issue that is raised by the reading or a possible implication of the reading. Identifying and developing good research questions is an important and challenging part of doing philosophy. Your weekly task is to develop questions that will provide a basis for engaging seminar discussions and possibly a starting point for fruitful philosophical investigation.

Sample Written Preparations can be found under the Content folder of D2L. Written preparations should be submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox.

### Topic Identification

Students are required to submit a report of the topic area they plan to research and write a paper on for this seminar. You should both describe the topic and explain why it would be a promising topic area to work on. This part of your report should be approximately 500 words in length. On a separate page of your report, provide a bibliography of at least three sources. Topic Identifications should be submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox.

### Research Proposal

Students are required to submit a research proposal of approximately 2000 words (not including references) that presents their research plan. Your proposal should identify your research question or problem, explain why it is important, and explain how you intend to address it. You should organize your proposal in two parts. The first part should explain and motivate the focus of your research by answering these questions: (i) What is the general topic area? (ii) What are the main views on the topic? (iii) What question or problem in this topic area will be the focus of your attention? The second part of the proposal should contain a section-by-section outline of how you plan to construct your research paper. Dedicate a paragraph describing each section of the proposed paper. This outline will serve as your research plan. It is just a tentative plan. At least 1200 words of your proposal should be devoted to the first part of the proposal. Also, your proposal must include at least three references. Research Proposals should be submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox.

### Research Paper

The word maximum is 7000 words (including footnotes, excluding references and any diagram notation). The paper should have a title, and please provide a word count when you submit your research paper. Papers should be submitted to the appropriate D2L dropbox.

### Participation

The success of the seminar strongly depends on class discussion. Every student should participate in class discussion. This does not mean that you need to enter the discussion at every class meeting. Students should contribute in at least half of our class meetings. The more voices heard in class, the better the discussion. You may feel like you have nothing to contribute, but even pointing out that you are confused about something in the reading or discussion is a contribution.

### **Due Dates and Grading**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
Written Preparations	Sept 16 – Dec 9, Thursdays, 2pm, in the appropriate D2L dropbox	3 points each, lowest mark dropped, for a total of 30 points
Topic Identification	Sunday, Oct 30	10 points
Research Proposal	Thursday, Nov 11	15 points
Research Paper	Monday, Dec 13	40 points
Participation		5 points

### Final grades will be awarded as follows

96-100 = A+	75-79 = B	55-59 = C-
90-95 = A	70-74 = B-	50-54 = D+
85-89 = A-	65-69 = C+	45-49 = D
80-84 = B+	60-64 = C	below 45 = F

- No Registrar scheduled final exam will be given.
- The submission of all assignments is required to pass the course.
- No late assignments will be accepted without an appropriate excuse.
- All assignments must be formatted according to the style citation requirements below.

### **Style and Citation Requirements**

All written work for this course should adhere to the style, citation, and formatting requirements of the journal *Philosophy of Science*. Those requirements can be found at <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/journals/phos/instruct>

## **IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**

### **Academic Accommodations**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. The student accommodation policy can be found at [ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf](https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for

Students with Disabilities: [ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf](https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf). Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

### **Absence or Missed Course Assessments**

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

### **Student Support and Resources**

Full details and information about the following resources can be found at [ucalgary.ca/current-students/student-services](https://ucalgary.ca/current-students/student-services)

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

### **Writing Assessment and Support**

The assessment of all written assignments — and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses — is based in part on writing skills. This includes correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as general clarity and organization. Research papers must include a thorough and accurate citation of sources. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services for assistance. For more information, and other services offered by the Student Success Centre, please visit [ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success](https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success).

### **Required Technology**

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote, and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

### **Responsible Use of D2L**

Important information and communication about this course will be posted on D2L (Desire2Learn), UCalgary's online learning management system. Visit <https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it> for how-to information and technical assistance.

All users of D2L are bound by the guidelines on the responsible use of D2L posted here: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/commitment-to-the-responsible-use-of-d2l/>. The instructor may establish additional specific course policies for D2L, Zoom, and any other technologies used to support remote learning. Instructional materials, including audio or video recordings of lectures, may not be posted outside of the course D2L site. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

**Media Recording**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: [https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf)

**Academic Misconduct/Honesty**

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which will be an F on the assignment or an F in the course, and possibly a disciplinary sanction such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at [ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html](http://ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html).

Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about referencing, please consult your instructor.

**University Policies**

The Instructor Intellectual Property Policy is available at [ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Intellectual-Property-Policy.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Intellectual-Property-Policy.pdf)

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, as outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>. The instructor (or TA) must return graded assignments directly to the student UNLESS written permission to do otherwise has been provided.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Acceptable-Use-of-Material-Protected-by-Copyright-Policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>).